

## State Recognition of Montessori Certification Task Force Report

### **Facts:**

Montessori certificates from MACTE-accredited institutions and programs are recognized by USDE and many regional accrediting agencies (e.g., NCA, SACS).

The NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND Act requires that each public school classroom be led by a Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT), which means a teacher must be certified or show proof of competence (HOUSSE-High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation) in the age level and/or discipline in which they teach.

Montessori certified teachers from MACTE-accredited institutions and programs meet the USDE and NCLB requirements if they are teaching in a Montessori classroom at the level for which they are certified.

HOWEVER, most states have individual certification requirements which teachers must also acquire to have a state teaching certificate for the specific age level and discipline OR hold a NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATE. Each of the 50 states has a different certification age range and requirements for certification in a subject discipline.

Since states have the right to make decisions regarding the qualifications of their teachers, many Montessori teachers meet the requirements of USDE/NCLB but not those of their states. In schools with declining populations, teachers' unions may require that schools place teachers with longevity in teaching positions for which they are not certified. These teachers often replace individuals with proper certification (e.g., districts in Minneapolis and Cincinnati, as described by Dennis Schapiro in **Public School Montessorian**).

## **Recommendations from the MACTE Task Force:**

1. Continue to provide support to Montessori teacher education institutions and programs and Montessori schools who want to petition their state credentialing agencies. Dr. Gretchen Warner, MACTE's Executive Director, routinely provides information to state authorities upon request.
2. Dr. Warner is collecting data on the status of recognition in each of the 50 states, beginning with the states in which accredited institutions and programs are located. The goal is to use states in which substantial progress has been made as examples for states considering recognition.
3. Combine representatives from MACTE and other Montessori organizations on a task force working together on the recognition issue, and draft a position paper/advocacy document.
4. Get Montessori schools involved. Parents have been very influential in the efforts currently underway in Minnesota, for example. M, the new AMS magazine, might be a vehicle for this.
5. Pursue contact with the National Board Certification agency to approach acceptance of Montessori certification.
6. Pursue contact with the regional accrediting agencies to request that they require Montessori classrooms be led by properly certified teachers (as they would for traditional classrooms which they accredit).
7. Request that other Montessori affiliates hire a lobbyist to promote recognition of Montessori certification.

The current MACTE task force members are **Barb Jens and Anita Wolberd**. Other individuals who want to volunteer their time and expertise are welcome to join; please contact Dr. Warner at [warner@macte.org](mailto:warner@macte.org).

The MACTE task force plans to work with Dr. Warner in determining who will make the contacts listed on page 2, as Dr. Warner has already established communications with some of these entities. From information that the task force has gathered, many public schools feel that they need help within the next year or two at the latest. We feel that MACTE, working with other Montessori organizations, will be able to address the HQT challenge. If solved, this would hopefully assist in resolving the union lay-off issue.